

ABC NEWS - NIGHTLINE: DEATH OF PRESIDENT GERALD FORD (12-27-2006)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2pmgayYvvc> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2pmgayYvvc>)

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From December 27th, 2006: SPECIAL EDITION OF NIGHTLINE. The Death of President Gerald Ford who served as the 38th President of The United States from 1974 - 1977. Ford died at his home in California at 6:45 P.M PST/9:45 P.M E.S.T, Ford lived to be 93 at the time the oldest President in history.

[00:00:00 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2pmgayYvvc\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2pmgayYvvc)

i kissed this young lady no jimmy came alive late night only on abc [Music] ah i'm a ford not a lincoln my fellow americans our long national nightmare is over this nation is sound this nation is secure this nation is on the march [Music] good evening i'm terry moran and tonight we're going to dedicate our program to the news that gerald r ford the 38th president of the united states has died at the age of 93 president ford died at his home peacefully we're told surrounded by members of his family including betty ford his wife of more than half a century that is the last video picture we have of president ford when president george w bush visited him at home in april of this year no president in american history lived longer than gerald ford and he spent most of that long life it seemed in service to the country in the navy during world war ii in the congress for 25 years in the

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ii in the congress for 25 years in the white house for just over two years and afterwards and every role he brought a basic sense of decency and honor but gerald ford will always be remembered for how he came to the presidency after the resignation of president richard nixon in a deeply troubled time deeply troubled and traumatized country and he will be remembered for what he did to heal the country we're going to begin our coverage by talking to richard norton smith who's a former director of the ford library scholar in residence at george mason university and a man who is close to the ford family knew gerald ford very well uh professor smith thanks very much for being with us tonight and i just want you to as a presidential historian sum up if you can what gerald ford means in american history well thank you terry i think it's understandable tonight the initial reaction we're all focusing upon the events surrounding how he became president which is an extraordinary story there's no doubt about it but i hope as the week goes on we might broaden our attention beyond the pardon of richard nixon and those first dramatic leaks of the ford presidency if you want to sum up the ford presidency very briefly contrast the mood of america in the summer of 1974 with what it was two years later at the time of the bicentennial which of course reached it in july of 1976 that didn't just happen i think the president had a lot to do with that and i think in the long run um i think that would be perhaps more important than what he did for the country as president how did he do it what did he bring to the office that did that well you know it's interesting he he knew washington inside out that was one of the things that actually worked against him in the 1976 campaign when when the electorate really decided

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when when the electorate really decided you know we want it outside but the fact is he he knew washington he'd spent 25 years you know he was the last president terry who got up and actually did his briefings every year in front of the press corps he actually introduced the federal budget every year and he stood there until there were no more questions and he did that because he spent 20 years on the house appropriations

committee so he knew the workings of government but beyond that he had a you know he had a quality people have talked about his decency and inclusiveness i can't tell you how many times i heard him say you know over the years i had many opponents but i never had an enemy and i think the contrast with the kind of politics that he practiced and the kind of politics that unfortunately have engulfed so much of this town and this country in recent years i think that's something that we probably want to pay some attention to over the next few days as well absolutely very few people could say that in politics today let me go to charles gibson our colleague anchor of world news and something you might not know veteran washington reporter himself who covered congress uh in the 70s and the ford campaign in 1976 and charlie what in your estimation uh is his contribution is gerald ford's contribution what do you remember covering him well i think richard make a very good point when he talks about the complete change in mood over two years that occurred in the ford presidency because the suspicion of the executive branch was so high when he came in his ambition was to be speaker of the house he never really wanted to be president but it was not something that uh was in his field of vision and he really became president by accident i take richard's point that you don't want to dwell too much on how he became president but the interesting thing is that richard nixon when he was faced with the spiro agnew resignation didn't particularly want to choose gerald for he wanted to choose

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choose gerald for he wanted to choose john conley but jerry ford was the one person because of the suspicion of the presidency that he knew he could get confirmed and jerry ford was indeed confirmed because as richard said he didn't have any enemies in the congress he was a creature of the congress when he came back to speak to the congress he talked about being back in the people's house it was really the body that he revered but you know i tip o'neill i covered for years and years and i remember tip in his memoirs uh said and i'm i'm going to be in exact in this quote but he said god is very good to america during the time of the civil war he gave us lincoln and at the time of watergate he gave us gerald ford he was the right man at the right time who restored the faith that america had in the presidency and i think that is uh ford's lasting legacy and it seems that the country kind of knows it too knows that the united states was lucky in in having or blessed depending on the point of view uh in having gerald ford there at that time well let's take a look back now at the life the long life and the career of gerald ford who died today at the age of 93. here is a look at his life the office of president of the united stand he was called the accidental president chosen by president nixon to fill the remainder of spiro agnew's term as vice president then succeeding to the presidency when the events of watergate forced richard nixon's own resignation help me god so help me god congratulations born july 14 1913 in omaha nebraska a lover of sports ford was a star football player in high school he played center leading his team to the state championship in his senior year he continued playing at the university of michigan after graduation he took a job as an assistant coach at yale where he also attended law school ford returned to grand rapids

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law school ford returned to grand rapids michigan to begin practicing law but world war ii intervened and he went into the navy as an ensign coming home in december of 1945 as a lieutenant commander in 1948 he decided to run for congress from michigan's fifth congressional district he won the general election in november with 61 percent of the vote during that campaign he married elizabeth bloomer betty as a young congressman ford was not exactly considered a star of the republican party but he was a team player in 1965 he outmaneuvered incumbent charles halleck succeeding him as house minority leader ford was now only one step away from his long cherished goal speaker of the house it was while he was minority leader that an embattled richard nixon chose ford in october 1973 as his vice president when spiro agnew resigned the choice was met with overwhelming congressional approval from both parties ford himself was subdued i'm a ford not a lincoln but when nixon resigned on august 9th the following year ford like lincoln became president but i assume the presidency under extraordinary circumstances never before experienced by americans this is an hour of history that troubles our minds and hurts our hearts my fellow americans our long national nightmare is over it was almost as if the country breathed a collective sigh of relief good old

jerry was now in the white house but on the morning of september 8 the good feeling ended ford announced he had given richard nixon a full free and absolute pardon and for the first time a president had to appear before a congressional committee to explain his actions people there was no deal

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his actions people there was no deal period there were other problems during his presidency first among them he faced a full-scale recession things seemed to fare no better on the international front in april 1975 americans witnessed the scenes of their countrymen being airlifted from the roof of the u.s embassy in saigon as the north vietnamese took over the city a month later cambodians captured the american merchant ship maya ghez president ford ordered a rescue it was successful but at a cost of 40 americans dead and 50 wounded in 1976 ford successfully fended off a challenge from ronald reagan to capture his party's nomination but in a hard-fought campaign against democrat jimmy carter his luck again turned bad in their second debate ford made what many considered a fatal mistake declaring there is no soviet domination of eastern europe that statement and the nixon pardon political observers contend cost him the election though he was only to be an interim caretaker gerald ford's decency and his openness helped heal the nation's wounds he will be remembered by many as good old jerry a unique contribution to the country and the presidency we'll take a break now when we come back gerald ford through the eyes of his white house photographer [Music] so wherever good can overcome

[00:12:01 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2pmgayYvvc&t=721s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2pmgayYvvc&t=721s)

wherever good can overcome that is where your contributions to the salvation army the go in german engineering a powerful motor and a handling system for precision and control from braun introducing the world's first electric shaver with the expertise of gillette blade technology precisely angled edges cut hair more effectively with every stroke for braun's closest most comfortable shave ever it even cleans and renews itself the new 360 complete from braun precision control perfection tonight on kimmel frank and guillermo face off with a kiss off looks like we may be rounding first ahead of the second base here plus the lovely terry hatcher returns yeah can i kiss this young lady no jimmy kimmel coming up only on abc [Music] [Applause] i really can't stay maybe it's cold outside i've got to go away baby it's cold out there this evening [Music] [Applause] [Music] [Applause] [Music] to remember sales event now through january 2nd it's the year-end sale at la-z-boy furniture galleries right now it's the only time you'll find our amazing year-end close-out prices save 70 on this recliner now only 299 or save 200 on this sectional now just 15.99 this week only plus limited time year-end financing hurry the year is almost over and so is this sale

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[Music] gerald ford may have been the best athlete ever to be president although his falls in office were the cause of some comedy president ford dying today at the age of 93 photographer david hume kennerly chronicled the war in vietnam and the way matthew brady documented the u.s civil war he won the pulitzer prize in 1972 and then he made the iconic photo of richard nixon waving goodbye as he left the white house in disgrace well nixon's successor gerald ford tapped kennerly to be his official white house photographer he sat down with nightline to reflect on ford's foreign policy triumphs president ford arrived in the soviet union general secretary brezhnev was waiting president ford backed up by secretary of state kissinger and a small official party smiled and blended in with the appearance of his host by slipping into a warm hat given him by the russians when we were in vladivostok to negotiate with bresnil the meetings were actually held at a soviet navy rehab center this photograph is one of secretary kissinger and probably general scowcroft and several others meeting with me outside our dwelling we had to meet outside because we knew that the soviets had bugged the place where we were staying this photo shows that wolf coat that i had that mr brashneff admired as we landed at the airport after our final luncheon mr braznaf said to me what i'd like to go in and see vladivostok i said yes i would be very pleased so i left the luncheon got in the

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so i left the luncheon got in the limousine mr brezhnev sat on my left i sat on his right in the back seat when he reached over and grabbed my left hand and squeezed it very tightly mr bradshner said to me under no circumstances can we permit a nuclear war to develop and i pledge to you representing my country i will do all i can to work with you and prevent a nuclear tragic war it was a very touching moment i think he was sincere when i left mr brezhnev at the airport following our negotiations of vladivostok i thought as a gesture i could give him this beautiful wolf coat which i did and he was very very grateful and these are tonight's headlines south vietnam surrenders and the communists occupy saigon we have dramatic film of the evacuation of americans and vietnamese from saigon this was in the roosevelt room i think that was where you really made the decision at that point to get the evacuation underway situation brought about a difference of opinion we had secretary of defense schlesinger who wanted to get out more quickly and we had graham martin the american ambassador to south vietnam who wanted to stay till the end if not longer and secretary kissinger and i had these two different opinions one from schlesinger one from martin i decided that we would stay to the very end to make sure that we got all americans and as many of our south vietnamese supporters as possible

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possible and that led to a very dramatic exit from the american embassy here's a photograph of me having gotten the word from saigon that it was hopeless and we were literally surrounded our forces were surrounded at the embassy it was a hectic tragic 24 hours but to sit there in the white house and to see that transpiring was probably as low a point during my administration as any i think that dramatically depicts my despair unhappiness with the tragedy of the united states losing under these very bad circumstances well that was gerald ford speaking to his former white house photographer there david hume kennerly and we'll take a break and when we come back more of gerald ford over the years in his own words that was my hunger roaring at me all the time eat eat you're hungry eat i tried diets diet pills exercise programs nothing worked then my doctor recommended the lap band system it's a device placed around the upper part of the stomach to help tame your hunger and it can be adjusted to help you feel full faster and longer unlike gastric bypass there's no stomach cutting or stapling i was back in my life in less than a week i will never look like that again visit lapband.com or call 1-800-391-7660 for your free information kit for you or someone you love as with any surgery there are possible risks and complications with the lap band system

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complications with the lap band system including but not limited to infection nausea vomiting band slippage and obstruction visit lapband.com or call 1-800-391-7660 for more risk information ask your doctor if you qualify for the lap band system then tame your hunger once and for all when you get a cold you can't always slow down but you can get the relief you need to keep going with nyquil at night and dayquil during the day feel better faster where in the u.s is clr clr is everywhere taking on america's toughest cleaning problems take thick calcium residue like the kind left on windows from the mist of this mighty waterfall clr takes it off immediately clr's in the desert taking on heavy mineral deposits in tap water the kind of tap water that can clog shower heads terribly just dip them in clr and it clears it right up where in the u.s is clr anywhere there are tough calcium lime and rust stains clr we show you clean available at fine retailers everywhere if you have a cold and high blood pressure you should know that decongestants in these cold medicines can raise your blood pressure so why take them take decongestant free core sedan hbp powerful cold relief that won't raise your blood pressure an army captain a mother with three sons in iraq and one extraordinary brave teenager whose life was changed by a generous american after seeing him here on abc's world news with charles gibson tomorrow prepare to be amazed by our people of the year it's that magical time of year get a special lease offer on a c230 sports sedan with a powerful 2.5 liter v6 at the mercedes-benz winter event now through january 2nd there's never been a better time to get that mercedes-benz on your wish list

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a few years ago on his 90th birthday in july 2003 president ford sat down for an interview to discuss his years in the white house he spoke about his disappointment over watergate his decision to pardon richard nixon and how he hoped to be remembered so here's more of president gerald ford in the first person he called me into his office on august 9 and said jerry i'm going to resign i wish you the best you will take over it's a tough circumstance but i have faith you'll do a good job i said this is a sad incident in our friendship but i'm prepared to do the job the office of president of the united states my total political ambition was to be speaker of the house of representatives well i was about to quit the congress and then mr agnew resigned and mr nixon resigned that was totally unplanned from my point of view this is an hour of history that troubles our minds and hurts our hearts i was badly shaken because i was misled by the white house on what the facts were in other words they were dishonest in their dealing with me my fellow americans

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dealing with me my fellow americans are long national nightmare is over that's why it was important for me to totally change the public impression of the white house from the point of view of honesty integrity when i became president i had the war in vietnam which you were trying to end i had a very full platter of foreign and domestic problems as president a full free and absolute pardon unto richard nixon the only way to get rid of mr nixon's problem was to pardon it there were certain people in our society who just hated mr nixon so much they couldn't stand to see him pardon it was done in the national interest and i'm very proud of the fact that it's now recognized as the right thing under the circumstance i hope that public and the historians when they write about my administration will say that president ford uh

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tonight gerald r ford the 38th president of the united states died today in california at the age of 93. president bush the white house issuing a statement tonight president bush calling president ford a great american saying he assumed the presidency in an hour of national turmoil with his quiet integrity common sense and kind instincts president ford helped heal our land and restore public confidence in the presidency we are told president bush has called betty ford president ford's widow and that he will attend the state funeral of president ford that will come in a few days after president ford's remains lie in repose in california and then he will lie in state in the rotunda of the united states capitol in washington abc news will have complete coverage of these stories as we remember the life and the contributions to our country of gerald r ford that's our report tonight i'm terry moran for cynthia mcfadden and martin beshear and all of us good night america [Music]

[00:30:02 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2pmgayYvvc&t=1802s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2pmgayYvvc&t=1802s)

[Music] it's what you've been waiting for it's that time of year ford's last call your last chance to get the best deals of o6 last chance on the ford f-150 america's favorite truck last chance on explorer america's favorite suv last chance on mustang gt with a first-time 3 000 cashback it's ford's last call and with deals like these it could be the most fun you've had all year disney on ice presents a disneyland adventure join disney pixar's the incredibles for an amazing day at the park with all your disney friends spin in the teacups with alice plunge into the pirates of the caribbean and swing through the jungle cruise with baloo it's fun for the whole family abc 7 invites you to opening night when tickets are 12 see mickey and minnie with your favorite superhero family the incredibles at disney

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